

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 03285 230730Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 230641Z SEPT 77
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5466
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TIRPOLI
DIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KHARTOUM 3285

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SU
SUBJECT: SADIQ AL-MAHDI DISCUSSES RECONCILIATION

REF: A. KHARTOUM 3171, B. FBIS 211536Z SEP 77

1. ACCORDING TO INTERVIEW WITH SADIQ AL-MAHDI ON BEIRUT RADIO (REF B), HOPES FOR HIS EARLY RETURN TO SUDAN QUOTE MAY HAVE BEEN PREMATURE UNQUOTE ALTHOUGH SADIQ STILL HOPES FOR EVENTUAL RECONCILIATION WITH PRESIDENT NIMEIRI. REF B GIVES DATE OF BROADCAST AS SEPT 23, AN APPARENT GARBLE AS THE FBIS REPORT WAS TRANSMITTED SEPT 21. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO EMBASSY BEIRUT MAY HAVE AS TO SOURCE OF RADIO REPORT.

2. THE RADIO BROADCAST QUOTED SADIQ AS SAYING THAT HE HAS NOW
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PAGE 02 KHARTO 03285 230730Z

CONSULTED WITH OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS IN EXILE, INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS, AND THEY HAVE REACHED A 'CONSENSUS' THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR RECONCILIATION MAY PROCEED. QUOTE LARGEST REMAINING PROBLEM UNQUOTE IS TO FIND FORMULA FOR CHANGING POLITICAL SYSTEM IN SUDAN TO SAFE-GUARD CIVIL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS. QUOTE WE INSIST

ON CURBING THE POWERS OF THE SECRET POLICE, ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND ON FAIR ELECTIONS TO ALL KEY POSTS IN THE STATE. UNQUOTE. SADIQ SAID THAT AN INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS RETURN WOULD BE A STRENGTHENING OF FRIENDLY TIES BETWEEN SUDAN AND LIBYA, AND A LOOSENING OF TIES WITH EGYPT.

3. SADIQ CONCLUDED THAT RECONCILIATION IS INCREASINGLY LIKELY. HE CITED HIS BELIEF THAT COMMUNISM AS A POLITICAL FORCE IS DEAD; SOCIALISM IN THE FORM OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND STATE-SPONSORED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS HERE TO STAY; AND IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE FOR SUDAN TO ATTEMPT A 'WESTMINISTER-TYPE MULTIPARTY REGIME'. HE ACCEPTED AND APPROVED THE 1972 ADDIS ACCORD WHICH ENDED THE SOUTHERN CIVIL WAR BY GRANTING THE SOUTHERN REGION CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY AND, IN FACT, CONGRATULATED NIMEIRI ON THIS ACHIEVEMENT. SADIQ SAID HE AGREED THAT ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN SUDAN SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED AND, LASTLY, THAT THE SUDAN DESPERATELY NEEDS PEACE AND STABILITY TO CARRY OUT ITS ROLE AS GRANARY OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. RADIO REPORT WAS BEGUN WITH QUOTE FROM SADIQ IN WHICH HE ASSERTED THAT INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN SUDAN OPPOSE QUOTE THE MOVES WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND MYSELF HAVE INITIATED TO RESTORE NATIONAL UNITY. I ALSO FEAR THAT THE AMERICANS MIGHT BE AGAINST THE IDEA FOR FEAR MY ROLE IN SUDAN WOULD BE TO LOOSEN TIES WITH EGYPT AND RESTORE FRIENDSHIP WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KHARTO 03285 230730Z

LIBYA. UNQUOTE. INTERVIEW WAS CONCLUDED BY COMMENTATOR EXPRESSING DOUBT WHETHER NIMEIRI CAN OR WILL AGREE TO EVENTUAL POWER-SHARING WITH OPPOSITION. AFTER SADIQ SAID IN RESPONSE HE WOULD RATHER HELP START A NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM AS A POLITICAL WRITER THAN A POLITICIAN, COMMENTATOR NOTED THAT SADIQ DID NOT EXCLUDE A POLITICIAN'S ROLE FOR HIMSELF.

5. COMMENT: SADIQ'S COMMENT THAT AMERICA MIGHT NOT FAVOR HIS RETURN UNDER RECONCILIATION AGREEMENTS FLIES IN FACE OF POPULAR WISDOM IN KHARTOUM THAT HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE OF PRESENT U.S. ADMINISTRATION HAD MUCH TO DO WITH NIMEIRI'S AMNESTY AND UNITY CAMPAIGN. RADIO TRIPOLI REGULARLY BROADCASTS SUDANESE OPPOSITION TALKS EACH NIGHT, AND RECENTLY NATIONAL FRONT EXILES HAVE REPEATED THEIR VIEW THAT 1972 ADDIS ABABA AGREEMENT WITH SOUTHERN REGION HAS SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS AND MUST BE RENEGOTIATED. SINCE RENEGING ON PEACE AGREEMENT IS A MAJOR THREAT TO SOUTH, SADIQ'S SUPPORT OF AGREEMENT IN THIS INTERVIEW REPRESENTS A WELCOME CHANGE --IF IT IS TO BE BELIEVED. THE TONE OF THE RADIO REPORT INDICATES THAT OPPOSITION LEADERS IN EXILE HAVE RECENTLY IMPROVED THEIR OWN UNITY AT EXPENSE OF PROGRESS TOWARD

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.
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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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